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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 000418

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/WE, EUR/CARC, EUR/RPM AND EUR/ERA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/24/2019
TAGS: PREL MOPS PBTS GG RU BE
SUBJECT: BELGIUM SUPPORTS NON-RECOGNITION POLICY ON
ABKHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA

REF: STATE 24186

Classified By: Acting Political Economic Counselor Robert Kiene, reason
 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On March 24, Poloff delivered reftel demarche
regarding non-recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia to
Willy De Buck, Director for Central and Eastern Europe at the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs. De Buck said that he had
recently discussed the issue of recognition of the two
breakaway regions with the Ambassador of Belarus to Belgium,
Vladimir Sanko. He said that Sanko was made aware that it
would not be right to recognize Abkhazia or South Ossetia and
moreover, that if Belarus did so, it would complicate
Belarus's participation in the EU's developing "Eastern
Partnership". De Buck added that the Eastern Partnership is
the most useful instrument Belgium and the EU have to keep
the six prospective partner countries on the reform track.
(Note: In this case, it is also useful for warding off
recognition by Belarus. At the March 21-22 Brussels Forum,
Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov was heard to complain
bitterly about the linkage by EU members in their dealings
with Belarus.)

¶2. (C) De Buck said that there are no visits to South Ossetia
or Abkhazia planned by any Belgian diplomats in the near
future. He also said that Belgium's diplomats in Moscow,
accredited as they are to Russia and not to Georgia, would
have no business visiting the territories. He had seen no
attempts by Russian diplomats to represent Abkhazia or South
Ossetia at the Foreign Ministry in Brussels.

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